

Press Release

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Lake County Recorder Warns Residents of Deed Scam

National Deed Service Offering a Service That is Nearly 15 Times Normal Cost

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Lake County Frank A. Suponcic is warning Lake County residents of unscrupulous mail solicitations that County residents may be receiving from a company transacting business as National Deed Service from Oak Brook, Illinois (1-888-480-1977). The Company is sending official looking letters to homeowners offering to provide them with a certified copy of their deed charging \$69.50. Suponcic's office has begun fielding calls from concerned residents inquiring about the official looking letters.

The purpose of a real estate deed is to provide proof of land ownership. "Most homeowners already have a copy of their deed but if a resident doesn't have a copy at hand, there is no need for them to be worried," he added.

“It is disturbing to me that anyone will attempt to solicit individuals and charge such an exorbitant amount for something that they can do on their own quite easily. I have a real problem with people that attempt to take advantage of the elderly who maybe are not aware that they can obtain a copy of their deed on their own at a fraction of what is being proposed.”

How does their service work? “All this company is doing is requesting a certified copy of a publicly filed document (the deed) which will cost them \$5. They will then mail it to the resident and charge them \$69.50. Anyone can request a copy of any publicly filed document and have it certified by the County official.”

Suponicic, posing as an interested consumer, called National Deed Services telephone number. He was told that orders take 30 days to fill and that they do not have access to original documents and that they have obtained the resident’s information from mailing lists that may be inaccurate. “It’s a shame that they do not place what information is provided on the recorded message at their office in their mass mail solicitations.”

There should be no cause for alarm if one doesn’t have a copy of their deed. Furthermore, most people will never need a certified copy of their deed. These companies - who secured this information from either bulk record sales or other public records available on line - are playing on the false sense of “need” and hoping that people will pay their fee out of fear of not having an important document.

Suponicic informs residents that they can obtain a paper certified copy of their deed from his office for approximately \$5 and that the deed will be mailed to them likely within 48 hours – not 30 days. The Ohio Revised Code requires the County Recorder to charge \$2 per page of the deed and \$1 for document certification. Most deeds are no more than two pages in length.

Lake County residents can request a certified copy of their deed either by mail or by visiting Suponcic's Painesville office in person between the weekday hours of 8am to 4pm. Payment must be made at the time of the deed request.

"A resident doesn't need a copy of the deed to transfer one's house as when you sell your house, a new deed is created," Suponcic added.

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